
MICHIGAN'S DRIVER TESTING PROGRAM

State and federal laws mandate driver testing for residents wishing to obtain a license or endorsement to drive an automobile, a commercial vehicle or a motorcycle. The Department of State administers the written driver knowledge tests at its branch offices. Driving skills tests are provided only through a third-party testing program. This program uses a statewide network of authorized public and private organizations to conduct driving skills tests. The Department of State is committed to assuring that the procedures for testing drivers are administered in a fair and reliable manner by qualified examiners.

Names and phone numbers of third-party testing organizations are available from the Department of State Web site at **www.Michigan.gov/sos** or any Secretary of State office.

TESTING IMPROPRIETIES

Michigan law mandates that:

- Any third-party testing organization or examiner who intentionally misrepresents a driving skills test by omitting any testing requirement or procedure, or participates in any illegal activity related to driver licensing, is subject to severe penalties. Those include loss of the testing authorization, criminal prosecution and restitution for monetary damages to the test applicant, the department or both.
- Any person, including the examiner or applicant, who

knowingly encourages, facilitates or participates in improper, illegal or fraudulent driver testing is also subject to criminal prosecution.

- Any person found to have been improperly, illegally or fraudulently tested must take the appropriate tests again. The fee for retesting may be charged to the applicant.
- Improper, fraudulent or unlawful driver's license tests result in illegal license applications.

UNDER THE MICHIGAN VEHICLE CODE (PUBLIC ACT 300 OF 1949), IT IS A FELONY:

- To make a false certification regarding any driver's license application.
- To bribe or attempt to corrupt a person or agency that conducts a driving test with the intent to influence the opinion or decision of the tester.
- For an examining officer who conducts a driving test under an agreement entered into with the Department of State to vary from, shorten or in any other way change the method or examination criteria prescribed under that agreement.
- For a person to forge, counterfeit or alter a driving test certification issued by a designated examining officer.

A felony committed under these laws is punishable by one to five years in prison and a maximum \$5,000 fine for the first offense. Subsequent convictions result in additional penalties.

BUSINESS REQUIREMENTS FOR THIRD-PARTY TESTING ORGANIZATIONS

Third-party testing organizations must adhere to certain business practices and administer driving skills tests according to established standards and procedures contained in a formal, legal agreement with the department. Among many contract requirements, third-party testing organizations must:

- Be approved by the department before testing services are offered.
- Maintain an established place of business and obtain written permission to use all approved test sites.
- Respond to all driver-testing service inquiries by the next business day.
- Publish a printed fee and refund policy and provide receipts. Test fees are set by the third-party testing organization and are not regulated by law.
- Maintain a surety bond.
- Ensure examiners attend and pass all required training and obtain department authorization before administering tests.

REPORTING IMPROPER, ILLEGAL OR FRAUDULENT TEST ACTIVITIES

If you are aware of any improper, illegal or fraudulent testing activities, report them immediately to the

Department of State. Please be sure to include the names of the people and organizations involved, the date of the incident and a detailed description of the activities observed or discussed. All legitimate reports will be investigated. A written statement may be required. This information should be submitted to the:

**Michigan Department of State
Driver Programs Division
Richard H. Austin Building
430 W. Allegan, 3rd Floor
Lansing, MI 48918
Phone (517) 241-6850
Fax (517) 373-0964**

ThirdPartyTesting@Michigan.gov

OPERATING YOUR MOTORCYCLE IN MICHIGAN

Before traveling, make sure you are aware of any state laws that affect the operation of a motorcycle. Michigan has several laws concerning registration, motorcycle endorsements and safe riding equipment – as well as traffic laws – that motorcyclists are required to obey.

THE DEFINITION OF A MOTORCYCLE

A motorcycle is a two- or three-wheeled motor vehicle with a saddle or seat that produces more than 2.0 brake horsepower and can attain speeds greater than 30 mph on a level surface. Some vehicles, such as

“pocket rockets” or “mini choppers,” may meet this definition, but do not have all of the equipment required by Michigan law to legally drive them on public roads and will not be registered by the Department of State.

REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

Under Michigan law, motorcycle registrations are issued for one year and expire on the owner’s birthday. You must register your motorcycle at a Secretary of State office if you plan to operate it on public roads. When registering, you will need to provide:

- Proof of insurance for at least \$20,000/\$40,000 public liability and \$10,000 property damage coverage.
- For an original registration, your motorcycle title. For a renewal registration, your renewal notice or last year’s registration.

RENEWING YOUR MOTORCYCLE REGISTRATION

You can skip the trip to a branch office by renewing your motorcycle registration online at the Department of State’s Web site at **www.Michigan.gov/sos**. Payment is by credit card. Registrations may also be renewed by touch-tone telephone and mail or in person at a branch office. Your license plate tabs will arrive within seven days. For more information, please refer to your renewal notice, visit the department’s Web site or contact a Secretary of State office.

OBTAINING A MOTORCYCLE ENDORSEMENT

To operate a motorcycle on public roads, you must possess a valid Michigan driver’s license with a **motorcycle endorsement**. The cost of the motorcycle endorsement is added to the regular driver’s license fee.

To obtain a motorcycle endorsement, you will need to pass a vision screening and a written knowledge test as well as a motorcycle safety course or a motorcycle skills test. The requirements for obtaining a motorcycle endorsement differ for teens and adults.

TEENS

To apply for a motorcycle endorsement, teens must be at least 16 and:

- Possess a valid Level 2 or Level 3 Graduated Driver License.
- Successfully complete an approved motorcycle safety course.
- Pass the written knowledge test administered at a Secretary of State office.

ADULTS

To apply for a motorcycle endorsement, adults 18 or older must:

- Possess a valid driver’s license.
- Pass the written knowledge test administered at a Secretary of State office.
- Pass the motorcycle skills test given by a third-party testing organization approved by the Department of State **OR** pass a motorcycle safety course approved by the Department of State.

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- If you have a valid motorcycle license or endorsement from another state, the requirement to pass a motorcycle skills test or motorcycle safety course may be waived.
 - Adults 18 or older are required to take a motorcycle safety course if they fail the motorcycle skills test twice.

Contact your local Secretary of State office or visit the department's Web site at **www.Michigan.gov/sos** for more information and the motorcycle safety course nearest you.

THE MOTORCYCLE TEMPORARY INSTRUCTION PERMIT

The Department of State issues the motorcycle Temporary Instruction Permit (TIP). A motorcycle TIP allows applicants to practice riding on public roads under the constant visual supervision of a licensed motorcycle operator age 18 or older. You may not ride at night or carry passengers when using a motorcycle TIP. Riders apply for a TIP before taking the motorcycle skills test to give them an opportunity to practice riding under supervision.

The motorcycle TIP is valid for 180 days from the issue date. To apply, you must have a valid operator's or chauffeur's license, pass a written test, and pay the endorsement fee. Teens ages 16-17 must have a valid Level 2 or Level 3 Graduated Driver License and present proof of enrollment in or

completion of an approved motorcycle safety course. Riders who want to extend a motorcycle TIP beyond 180 days must make a new application.

MOTORCYCLE SKILLS TEST

The motorcycle skills test should include all the components as described in this manual. Provided below are the required skills test elements and approximate times for the test. The allotted times are estimated minimums.

Motorcycle Skills Test

- Vehicle inspection – 5 minutes, not scored.
- Basic control skills on range – 10 minutes, scored.

During the motorcycle skills test, certified examiners must always:

- Read standard instructions to each applicant for each part of the test (a list of instructions is provided to the examiner for this purpose).
- Use only department-approved, off-street exercises.

Before taking the skills test, you must have a **legally equipped and registered motorcycle**. To drive a motorcycle to your skills test, you must have a valid motorcycle TIP and be under the constant visual supervision of a licensed motorcycle operator at least age 18.

The motorcycle skills test approved by the Department of State has seven exercises that gauge your ability to handle a motorcycle, including starting, accelerating, turning and braking.

- **Engine stall:** This is scored during the entire test. Points are assessed each time you stall the engine during any exercise.
- **Sharp turn:** You ride a short path and then make a sharp left turn at low speed while staying inside a 5-foot path.
- **Normal stop:** You must make a smooth stop without skidding, with the front tire of your motorcycle in a painted box.
- **Cone weave:** You must weave through a series of five cones that are placed 15 feet apart with a 3-foot offset.
- **U-Turn:** You must make a right U-turn in a marked area. Those operating motorcycles over 500 cc are allowed more room to complete the U-turn. Motorcycles of 500 cc or less have a smaller U-turn area.
- **Quick stop:** You accelerate along a straight path. At the end of the path (marked by cones), you must stop your motorcycle as quickly and safely as possible.
- **Obstacle swerve:** You accelerate along a straight path. At the end of the path (marked by cones), you must swerve to avoid an obstacle line and then swerve to avoid the sidelines of the exercise.

After you have successfully passed the motorcycle skills test, you will be given a certificate that must be presented at a Secretary of State office when you apply for your motorcycle endorsement.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS AND SAFETY GUIDELINES FOR OPERATING A MOTORCYCLE

Michigan law requires the following when you operate your motorcycle:

- Wear a properly fastened safety helmet on your head. It must meet U.S. Department of Transportation standards and be properly labeled. Passengers must also wear a properly fastened and approved safety helmet.
- Use shatterproof goggles, a face shield or windshield to protect your eyes when riding at speeds of 35 mph or more. Eye protection is recommended when riding at any speed.
- Sit on a regular, permanently attached seat.
- Never carry any package, bundle or article that prevents you from keeping both hands on the handlebars of the vehicle.
- Never let anyone without a valid driver's license and motorcycle endorsement operate your motorcycle.
- Never attach your motorcycle to another vehicle for a "tow."
- Never operate a motorcycle on sidewalks, more than two side-by-side on a public road, between lanes of traffic, between traffic and the curb or on a bicycle path.

Keep the following points in mind when traveling by motorcycle in Michigan:

- **Lane use** – When operating your motorcycle, you are entitled to use a full lane.

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- **Freeways or limited access highways** – Motorcycles with engines smaller than 125 cc are not allowed on freeways or limited access highways.
 - **Equipment** – Your motorcycle must have the following equipment, which must be in good condition: front- and rear-wheel brakes, headlight, taillight, stoplight, muffler, horn, rearview mirror and permanently attached seat.
 - **Handlebars** – Your motorcycle handlebars must be positioned so that there are no more than 15 inches between the lowest point of the (unoccupied) seat to the highest point of the handle grips.
 - **Signaling turns** – Signaling when you are turning or changing lanes is not only a courtesy, it's the law.
 - Before stopping or turning, see if it is safe. Then, let other drivers know of your intention to turn by using your turn signal or the appropriate hand and arm signals.
 - Start your signal at least 100 feet before you turn. In heavy traffic or on freeways, signal sooner so drivers behind you have time to change their speed or position.
 - Make sure your turn signal light has stopped blinking after you have turned.
 - Always use turn signals to alert other drivers when you plan to change lanes.
 - The proper hand and arm signals are: left arm and hand bent up for a right turn; left arm

and hand straight out for a left turn; and left arm and hand bent down for a slow or stop.

- **Passengers** – Motorcycles with extra foot pegs and seating space may be used to carry a passenger. If your motorcycle has this equipment, it does not necessarily mean that a passenger can be carried legally or safely. If in doubt, check with a motorcycle manufacturer or dealer. A motorcycle operator may **never** carry more than one passenger.
- **Starting on a hill** – Use the front brake to hold the motorcycle while you start the engine and shift into first gear. Change to the foot brake to hold your vehicle while you operate the throttle with your right hand. Slowly open the throttle for more power and slowly release the clutch. If you release it too quickly, the front wheel may lift off the ground or the engine may stall. Ease off the foot brake as the engine slows down and engages.

BE EXTRA CAREFUL OF:

- Animals crossing the road, especially at night.
- Ice in the winter, early spring and late fall.
- Approaching livestock being ridden, driven or led so as not to startle the person or animals.
- Pedestrians crossing, including blind pedestrians and joggers. You must yield the right of way.
- Bicyclists who may cross roads without warning. Be prepared to stop or avoid them.

DRINKING AND DRIVING IN MICHIGAN

It is illegal to operate a motor vehicle in Michigan:

- While intoxicated or impaired by alcohol, illegal drugs and certain prescribed medications.
- With a bodily alcohol content of 0.08 or more.
- With the presence of a Schedule 1 drug or cocaine. Schedule 1 drugs have no medical uses and present a high risk for abuse. Included in this group are marijuana, Ecstasy, hallucinogens, designer amphetamines and heroin.

Drunken drivers face swift and tough action under Michigan's drunken driving laws. The laws:

- Require courts to decide drunken driving cases within 77 days after an arrest.
- Require a six-month driver's license suspension, even for a first conviction. Drivers may be eligible to receive a restricted license after serving 30 days of the suspension.
- Require five days to one year of jail time, 30 to 90 days of community service, or both, for a second conviction of drunken driving.
- Include a felony for a conviction for drunken driving that causes death.
- Include a felony for a conviction for drunken driving that causes a serious injury to another.
- Require fines for a conviction of driving while a driver's license is suspended or revoked of up to \$500 for a first offense and \$1,000 for an additional offense.

- Do not allow hardship appeals for habitual alcohol offenders.
- Require a \$125 reinstatement fee if your driver's license was suspended, revoked or restricted.
- Require a Driver Responsibility Fee of \$1,000 for two consecutive years for driving while intoxicated, and a \$500 fee for two consecutive years for driving while impaired, with the presence of a Schedule 1 drug or cocaine, under the Zero Tolerance law or for child endangerment.

GENERAL DRIVER'S LICENSE RENEWAL INFORMATION

Your driver's license is valid for four years. The license expiration date is shown on the upper right corner. The Department of State sends a renewal notice about 45 days before your license expires. Plan to renew at least two weeks before it expires. If your renewal notice does not arrive or is lost, do not let your driver's license expire. Go to a Secretary of State office and renew it.

PROVIDING A SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER

Anyone applying for or renewing a Michigan driver's license must provide a Social Security number before the application can be processed. The federal Welfare Reform Act requires states to collect Social Security numbers for use in child-support enforcement.

A person who has never been issued a Social Security number must certify to that fact on an application obtained at a Secretary

of State office. Individuals who make a false statement on the application are subject to imprisonment for one to five years, a fine of \$500 to \$5000, or both. The individual's license or permit will also be suspended.

RENEWING YOUR DRIVER'S LICENSE

When you renew your driver's license at a branch office, you will be required to take a vision screening. A new photograph will be taken. You may pay the renewal fee with cash, money order or personal check. Credit card payment at the counter is offered at Secretary of State PLUS offices and SUPER!Centers.*

***At the time of this printing, only Discover credit cards are accepted at PLUS offices and SUPER!Centers.**

RENEWING YOUR DRIVER'S LICENSE BY MAIL

You may be eligible to renew your driver's license by mail if you:

- Renewed in person the last time.
- Do not have a commercial driver's license.
- Are not listed on the sex offender registry.

If you have had a change in your physical condition during the past six months, you must renew in person. You may need to submit a physician's statement to renew.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Michigan law requires that your driver's license address, which is your place of residence, matches the address on your voter registration card. You may submit a change of address at any Secretary of State office or by mail. There is no fee for this service. If you go to a branch office, a change-of-address sticker will be provided for the back of your license. Mail-in forms are available from the department's Web site at **www.Michigan.gov/sos**. Failure to notify the Department of State of a change of address may result in a driver's license suspension.

OFFICE HOURS

- Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday – 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- Wednesday – 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Offices in city centers are open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- Secretary of State PLUS offices and SUPER!Centers provide extended Wednesday hours from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.
- SUPER!Centers also offer Saturday hours from 9 a.m. to noon.
- Smaller offices may close for a lunch hour, and all branches are closed on state holidays.